

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS PREDICTORS: A STUDY OF SELECTED IT SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN DELHI AND NCR

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ABSTRACT

The general belief is that employees get connected to their work and therefore positively influencing their performance. Acquiring international attention, employee engagement is gaining momentum and popularity. According to Thayer (2008), the concept of employee engagement is speedily gaining importance in the workplace; and within their organization, employers can create a positive psychological environment by identifying the factors that can boost employee engagement.

As defined by Right Management (2006), true engagement is every person in the organisation being understanding and committed to the success of the business, creating job satisfaction and developing aspects of commitment, pride and advocacy about the organisation's products and brand. Although the organization is blamed for not making a process work, it is essential to manage effective communication and involve the employees and align them with the organisation. According to Konrad (2006), employee engagement can lead to a win-win situation for both employees and managers. This is achieved by providing training to employees to build their knowledge and skills to make and implement decisions, providing information about their actions that affect business performance and also rewarding them for their improved performance.

OBJECTIVE

To identify and measure the key predictors of employee engagement among the trainee and executive level employees of selected IT sector organizations in Delhi and NCR.

METHODS/STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data on demographic information about the participants collected through a survey. A well-established survey instrument called Gallup's Q12 is used to measure employee engagement. This tool consists of 12 statements (factors) designed to measure the extent to which employees are engaged in their work and which are found to be actionable at the supervisor or manager level in an organization.

FINDINGS

IT sector organizations should ensure a dynamic work place relationship which will allow the employees to express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during their role performance. This study aims to measure the engagement level of employees and to identify the factors that need to be improved to increase the level of engagement. The relationship between internal communication and employee engagement within the workplace provides quantifiable evidence. The importance and prominence of organization-employee and supervisor-employee relationships within the work place is unveiled from the results of the study. From the results of the data analysis, we can conclude that the employees know what is expected of them at work and the organization encourages the sharing of information, knowledge and resources.

APPLICATION/IMPROVEMENTS

By identifying key predictors of employee engagement there is noteworthy contribution from this study especially for talented employee retention and full engaging system. The significance of this study has to be viewed and admitted with its own limitations. The size, convenience and homogeneity of the sample might limit the generalize ability of this study.

KEYWORDS: Commitment, Relationship, Development, Working Environment, Gallup's Q12 Items & Talent Management

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INTRODUCTION

The satisfaction and trust of employees is a key to engagement and commitment and, of course, increasing productivity, the leaders must be aware that human resources management and development really requires more attention. Michelman (2004) points out that in leading engagement, great managers will work to see that employees are rewarded for their performance or according to a person's talent is developed through progressively more challenging and meaningful assignments.

The success of the team or the company itself lies in the level of performance of the engaged employees which they are well aware of and knows how to celebrate their achievements too. The simultaneous presence of three behaviours in employees, namely, their performance in job, citizenship behaviour and involvement is the definition of engagement given by Newman and Harrison (2008). According to Paradise (2008), there are many potential reasons for engaging employees, including enhancing customer service, increasing customer satisfaction, improving organizational productivity, improving the bottom line, positively affecting teamwork and morale, aligning employees with strategy, reducing turnover, attract new employees, building a succession pipeline, helping workers live more satisfying lives and reducing absenteeism.

Gallup, the oldest consulting organization in conducting engagement survey, has found that the manager is the key to an engaged workforce. James Clifton, the CEO of Gallup organization, indicates that employees who have close friendships at work are more engaged workers (Clifton, 2008).

Dernovsek (2008) says Gallup likens employee engagement to a positive employee's emotional attachment and commitment. Gallup organization defines employee engagement as the involvement in and enthusiasm for work.

In ensuring employee engagement, communication plays an important role. As emphasized by Wiley et al.(2010), Kahn (1992), MacLeod and Clarke (2009), employees require clear communication from superiors to relate their role with leadership vision. Further, they identify poor communication as a barrier to engagement. Engagement is affected by internal communication. Internal communication is an organizational practice that effectively conveys the organizational values to all employees, thus obtaining their support in reaching organizational goals. According to Bindl and Parker (2010), as cited in Welch (2011), internal communication is crucial for ensuring employee engagement.

Employee engagement is defined as the cognitive, emotional and behavioural energy an employee directs toward positive organizational outcomes, according to Shuck and Reio (2013). Employee engagement is operationally defined as a series of psychological states (cognitive, emotional and behavioural), ultimately representing an intention to act,

comprising motivation-like qualities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Exploring the employee engagement from the lenses of individual differences among selected IT sector organizations is the prime objective of the present research. A good explanation of variation in engagement level based on gender, age, experience level and education of the employees in Indian settings is provided by this study. In order to identify the key predictors of employee engagement among the trainees and executive level employees of reputed IT sector organizations in Delhi and NCR by applying The Gallup's Q12Items Questionnaire is the main aim of this study. A 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) has been used in designing the questionnaire where a total agreement to the aspect of a question is indexed with 5 points while a total disagreement is indexed as 1.

The convenience samples consisted of 375 IT employees who belong to five organizations of IT sector operating in Delhi and NCR available to take the survey. From the sample it was found that, there was a larger percentage of male than female participants. The service employees consisted of multiple shifts. The present study is confined to the trainee and executive level employees of the organization. Based on the thoughts and perception of the respondents they were asked to rate the twelve factors as to which of them contributed more to their engagement at workplace. The research is looking for responses to the questions (factors) with the "5", since these are the indicators that measure the strength of a workplace.

RESULTS

The culture of IT organizations was assessed using a quantitative approach. Questions have been grouped and tabulated for Gallup research. Data collected has been analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Tables 1 to 5 show the frequency analysis based on various demographic variables. It is understood that researchers had a mix of the employees to understand the overall employees' perception. Of the 5 IT organizations tested using the Cronbach's alpha test, the reliability of the questionnaire when the number of items (question) is 12 is shown in Table 6. For further investigation, this instrument found to be reliable and can be used with other statistical procedures, as the value of alpha is higher than accepted (0.70). Frequencies, mean and standard deviation of questions represented as factors among 5 selected IT organizations are shown in Table 7.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics - HCL

Variable	Category	N	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	75	50	66.7	1.33	.475
	Female		25	33.3		
Age	21-30	75	53	70.7	2.29	.458
	>30		22	29.3		
Experience	1-5	75	36	48.0	1.60	.637
	6-10		33	44.0		
	>10		6	8.0		
Level	Trainee	75	16	21.3	1.79	.412
	Executive		59	78.7		
Education	Graduate	75	56	74.7	1.25	.438
	Postgraduate		19	25.3		

Of the 75 respondents of the survey, 66.7% were male; 70.7% were between 21 and 30 years of age. To gain work

experience, 48% respondents were employed in the IT sector for less than six years, whereas 52% were employed for more than six years. Of the respondents, 78.7% were executives, while the remaining were trainees. Approximately three fourth of the respondents (74.7%) completed a graduation degree, whereas 25.3% were postgraduates. Standard deviation of all variables was less than one, meaning that most of the observations are clustered around the mean and showed higher reliability.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics - CSC

Variable	Category	N	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	75	68	90.7	1.09	.293
	Female		7	9.3		
Age	21-30	75	41	54.7	2.44	.526
	>30		34	45.3		
Experience	1-5	75	31	41.3	1.83	.795
	6-10		26	34.7		
	>10		18	24		
Level	Trainee	75	0	0	2.00	.000
	Executive		75	100		
Education	Graduate	75	31	41.3	1.59	.496
	Postgraduate		44	58.7		

Of the 75 respondents who participated in the survey, 90.7% are male; 54.7% were aged between 21 and 30 years. For work experience, 41.3% respondents have been employed in the IT sector for less than six years, whereas 58.7% have been employed for more than six years. All the respondents were executives. In all, 41.3% respondents completed a graduation degree, whereas 58.7% were postgraduates. Standard deviation of all variables was less than one, meaning that most of the observations are clustered around the mean and showed higher reliability.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics - TCS

Variable	Category	N	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	75	65	86.7	1.13	.342
	Female		10	13.3		
Age	21-30	75	62	82.7	2.17	.381
	>30		13	17.3		
Experience	1-5	75	50	66.7	1.40	.615
	6-10		20	26.7		
	>10		5	6.7		
Level	Trainee	75	13	17.3	1.83	.381
	Executive		62	82.7		
Education	Graduate	75	49	65.3	1.35	.479
	Postgraduate		26	34.7		

86.7% were male of the 75 respondents who participated in the survey. Majority of the respondents 82.7% are between 21 and 30 years of age. For work experience, 66.7% respondents have been employed in the IT sector for less than six years whereas 33.3% have been employed for more than six years. 82.7% respondents are executives while the remaining are trainees. Approximately two third of the respondents 65.3% have completed a graduation degree whereas 34.7% were postgraduates. Standard deviation of all variables was less than one, meaning that most of the observations are clustered around the mean and showed higher reliability.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics - IBM

Variable	Category	N	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	75	71	94.7	1.05	.226
	Female		4	5.3		
Age	21-30	75	54	72	2.28	.452
	>30		21	28		
Experience	1-5	75	46	61.3	1.55	.759
	6-10		17	22.7		
	>10		12	16		
Level	Trainee	75	15	20	1.80	.403
	Executive		60	80		
Education	Graduate	75	38	50.7	1.49	.503
	Postgraduate		37	49.3		

In total 75 respondents participated in the survey. Of which 94.7% are male; 72% respondents were between 21 and 30 years of age. For less than six years, 61.3% respondents are in the IT sector, and for more than six years, 38.7% have been employed. Of the respondents, more than three fourth (80%) are executives, while the remaining are trainees. Approximately half of the respondents (50.7%) completed a graduation degree, whereas less than 49.3% were postgraduates. Standard deviation of all variables was less than one, meaning that most of the observations are clustered around the mean and showed higher reliability.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics - ORACLE

Variable	Category	N	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	75	54	72	1.28	.452
	Female		21	28		
Age	21-30	75	34	45.3	2.55	.501
	>30		41	54.7		
Experience	1-5	75	4	5.3	2.44	.598
	6-10		34	45.3		
	>10		37	49.3		
Level	Trainee	75	0	0	2.00	.000
	Executive		75	100		
Education	Graduate	75	53	70.7	1.29	.458
	Postgraduate		22	29.3		

Of the 75 respondents who participated in the survey, 72% are male. 54.7% respondents are more than 30 years old. Majority of the respondents 94.7% have work experience of more than five years in the IT sector. All the 100% respondents are Executives. 70.7% respondents have completed a graduation degree whereas 29.3% are postgraduates. All variables have a standard deviation below one, so this means most of the observations are clustered around the mean and the results have higher reliability.

Table 6: Reliability Statistics - Gallup's Q12 Items Questionnaire

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
HCL	.832	.835	12
CSC	.863	.866	12
TCS	.877	.881	12
IBM	.798	.805	12
ORACLE	.825	.829	12

The reliability of the questionnaire has been tested using the Cronbach's alpha test and the alpha values are found higher than accepted (0.70), which shows that the instrument is reliable.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Engagement Factors in 5 Selected IT Organizations

Factor	Organization	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Role Clarity	HCL	4	2	3	55	11	3.89	.879
	CSC	3	3	4	46	19	4.0	.915
	TCS	1	4	11	50	9	3.83	.760
	IBM	0	1	8	46	20	4.13	.644
	ORACLE	0	2	24	35	14	3.81	.766
Adequate Resources	HCL	2	2	10	49	12	3.89	.798
	CSC	4	2	5	42	22	4.01	.979
	TCS	2	7	9	39	18	3.85	.982
	IBM	2	1	6	46	20	4.08	.801
	ORACLE	0	0	11	51	13	4.03	.569
Effective Job Opportunity	HCL	3	2	27	36	7	3.56	.858
	CSC	2	4	17	39	13	3.76	.898
	TCS	2	11	12	44	6	3.55	.934
	IBM	0	3	13	43	16	3.96	.743
	ORACLE	0	0	15	42	18	4.04	.667
Recognition	HCL	3	9	32	25	6	3.29	.927
	CSC	4	8	25	31	7	3.39	.985
	TCS	6	13	27	22	7	3.15	1.074
	IBM	3	12	19	35	6	3.39	.985
	ORACLE	0	6	14	35	20	3.92	.882
Support and Cooperation	HCL	2	4	22	35	12	3.68	.903
	CSC	2	2	10	44	17	3.96	.845
	TCS	5	10	19	32	9	3.40	1.078
	IBM	1	6	23	32	13	3.67	.905
	ORACLE	0	2	11	46	16	4.01	.688
Developmental Encouragement	HCL	2	6	22	32	13	3.64	.954
	CSC	4	0	14	39	18	3.89	.953
	TCS	1	9	19	37	9	3.59	.902
	IBM	0	7	16	45	7	3.69	.771
	ORACLE	0	1	12	41	21	4.09	.701
Inclusiveness	HCL	1	2	23	38	11	3.75	.790
	CSC	1	2	6	53	13	4.0	.697
	TCS	0	6	18	45	6	3.68	.738
	IBM	0	3	11	55	6	3.85	.608
	ORACLE	0	0	12	41	22	4.13	.664
Belongingness	HCL	0	5	20	40	10	3.73	.777
	CSC	2	3	12	47	11	3.83	.828
	TCS	4	9	20	37	5	3.40	.973
	IBM	0	2	19	41	13	3.87	.723
	ORACLE	0	0	10	49	16	4.08	.587
Committed Teamwork	HCL	1	4	13	47	10	3.81	.783
	CSC	2	3	18	36	16	3.81	.911
	TCS	2	8	14	43	8	3.63	.912
	IBM	0	5	17	43	10	3.77	.764
	ORACLE	0	2	14	42	17	3.99	.726
Friendly Relationships	HCL	2	6	14	37	16	3.79	.963
	CSC	4	8	11	33	19	3.73	1.119
	TCS	2	9	15	33	16	3.69	1.026
	IBM	2	8	11	37	17	3.79	1.004

	ORACLE	0	2	31	31	11	3.68	.756
Feedback Appraisal	HCL	3	8	24	32	8	3.45	.963
	CSC	2	7	11	42	13	3.76	.942
	TCS	4	11	19	32	9	3.41	1.054
	IBM	2	6	12	42	13	3.77	.924
	ORACLE	1	1	4	52	17	4.11	.669
Learning and Development	HCL	2	3	21	35	14	3.75	.902
	CSC	2	5	16	35	17	3.80	.959
	TCS	5	3	10	42	15	3.79	1.031
	IBM	0	1	8	41	25	4.20	.678
	ORACLE	0	1	10	38	26	4.19	.711

According to SPSS Techniques Series a standard deviation of one or less would mean that most of the observations cluster around the mean, which would give it a higher reliability. When the results were tabulated it was found that majority of factors have a mean value of more than 3.5 implying that the factors influenced employee engagement to a great extent. Majority of factors have a standard deviation greater than 0.5 and less than 1 indicating that the responses are moderately distributed. There was no consensus attributed to the fact that in organization friendly relationships exist as the standard deviation of more than 1 indicates a significant variation from the mean.

CONCLUSIONS

A "good" and "successful" company is a common desire of employers and employees worldwide. At the same time, success of the company and its development is largely dependent on the quality of staff, which is expected to have a lot of business skills – everything from precision, accuracy, different abilities, efficiency etc. Therefore employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement, measurement and action.

Hughes and Rog (2008) state that employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that in turn influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work.

Employee engagement represents the level at which employees feel satisfaction and believe in what they do, while performing their work, making them feel valued and respected. To encourage employee engagement it is important to manage the employees. That means that the employees must be aware of the vision, strategic orientation and values of the company. It is urgently needed to boost the communications between them and the leadership; that employees get involved in the process of business decision-making with their ideas and solutions.

Kanaka (2012) goes on to say that encouraging employee participation by encouraging employees to participate in decision making and other organizational tasks is an important facet every organization needs to build. Employee participation ensures a high degree of connectivity to the organization and this connectivity is employee engagement.

The research study looked for responses to the 12 engagement questions(factors) that scored "5", since these are the indicators that measure the strength of a workplace. According to Gallup, the higher the percentage of "5" received the more engaged employees are. The research reveals that the level of employee engagement among the trainee and executive cadre is quite satisfactory. The study has identified learning and development, adequate resources and inclusiveness as the critical predictors i.e. those survey items which have major impact on engagement. For the sample as a whole, it is evident that there is considerable scope for improvement in the level of employee engagement in the organization, if annual engagement surveys are rolled out on a company wide basis and actions are taken based on the results. Since the

parameters used in the study vary from one study to another it is not possible to generalize our findings. The employee engagement predictors are customized and tailor-made to suit the working conditions prevailing in organization and practices in operation in specific industry.

Lastly to conclude, by focusing more on employee engagement, organizations are more likely to maintain a strong, motivated workforce that is willing to expend extra effort, drive business goals, and deliver a return on HR's talent management investment.

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